

Appln. No. 10/037,048

Attorney Docket No. 10541-887

I. Listing of Claims

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended): A method for manufacturing a transverse leaf spring, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a forming means and a mold adapted to receive said forming means;

installing a pre-braided tubular fiberglass structure over said forming means, said pre-braided structure comprising a plurality of elongated fibers arranged to form an elongated, elastic tubular structure;

placing said forming means and said pre-braided structure into a mold cavity within defined by interior walls of said mold;

injecting a resin material into said mold to cover said fibers;

after injection of said resin material, using said forming means to apply
applying pressure between said forming means and to said mold cavity interior walls
of said mold to press said fiberglass structure and said resin material against said
interior walls of said mold cavity walls; and

curing said resin material to create an integrated leaf spring component.

3. (Original): The method of claim 2 wherein said forming means further comprises an elastomeric bladder adapted to fit closely within said mold cavity.

4. (Original): The method of claim 3 wherein said step of applying pressure further comprises inflating said bladder when in said mold cavity.

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5. (Previously presented): The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of removing said component from said mold cavity, and wherein the step of curing said component is achieved outside of said cavity.

6. (Previously presented): The method of claim 2 wherein said tubular fiberglass structure is radially and longitudinally elastic.

7. (Previously presented): A system for manufacturing a transverse leaf spring, said system comprising:

an inflatable forming means having a shape corresponding to said leaf spring;
means for placing a pre-braided tubular fiberglass structure over said forming means, said pre-braided structure comprising a plurality of elongated fibers arranged to form an elongated, elastic tubular structure, such that the forming means extends axially within an interior portion of the tubular structure;

a mold cavity adapted to receive said forming means and said pre-braided structure;

means for injecting a resin material into said mold cavity; and

a means for inflating said forming means, whereby said tubular structure and said resin material are pressed together against the mold cavity.

8. (Original): The system of claim 7 wherein said forming means further comprises an elastomeric bladder adapted to fit closely within said mold cavity.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Original): The system of claim 7 wherein said tubular fiberglass structure further comprises a plurality of fiberglass fibers extending helically in an interwoven fashion in a tubular shape.

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11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously presented): The method of claim 2 wherein said plurality of elongated fibers are formed from groups of generally aligned, multiple strands of fibers, each of said groups being interwoven into said pre-braided fiber structure.

13. (Original): The method of claim 12 wherein a plurality of said groups extend helically around said structure to form said tubular shape.

14-15. (Cancelled)